

Exhibition information

JIM CAMPBELL INDIRECT IMAGING

Sat 22 November 2014 — Sun 25 January 2015

DCA

Dundee Contemporary Arts

Open daily 11:00-18:00
Open late Thursday 20:00
Admission free
www.dca.org.uk

INTRODUCTION

“Though high-tech, Campbell’s work is actually low-resolution because he renders the film down until individual pixels correspond to single LEDs. In fact, he is interested in achieving the *lowest* possible resolution in these works, the minimum threshold at which the viewer can discern moving shadows as figurative elements. This perceptual reflex is hard-wired into our eyes and brains, which have evolved to see objects in motion more easily than when they are at rest.”

Cliff Lauson, *Light Art: An Immaterial Material*
pp. 25-26, *Light Show*, Hayward Publishing, London; 2013

This winter, DCA presents *Indirect Imaging*, the first ever UK solo exhibition by renowned American artist Jim Campbell. Using LEDs, Campbell constructs exquisite light sculptures derived from simple films, for example, birds in flight or commuters walking. By reducing the visual information to the bare minimum he creates captivating works which make the everyday appear magical.

Jim Campbell was born in Chicago in 1956 and lives in San Francisco. He studied Mathematics and Engineering at MIT in the late 1970s and has since worked in filmmaking, interactive video and LED light technology. This background enables him to make immersive works that explore the space between the representative and the abstract. In a world of high definition, Campbell’s evocative and deliberately lo-fi work reminds us of something more timeless.

Campbell’s work is held in the collections of major museums including MoMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, SFMOMA, LACMA, Berkeley Art Museum and the San Jose Museum of Art. His numerous public commissions include San Diego airport, Madison Square Park in New York, the Dallas Cowboys Stadium and the new San Francisco central subway at Union Square. Campbell has also successfully collaborated with ballet and dance companies.

Graham Domke
DCA Exhibitions Curator

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Untitled (for the Sun)

1999

LED number display, light sensor, custom electronics

Collection of the de Young Museum, San Francisco and the Collection of David Breskin

Installed at DCA reception desk in place of our regular clock, Campbell takes us back to our primitive origins with a circadian clock working with the levels of lightness and darkness in the given day. Campbell has developed a digital rendering of the daily rhythms of the sun - the clock displays the percentage of the day (and night) that has already passed by harnessing a wireless light sensor installed at the top of the building, automatically synchronizing to the rhythms of the sun. The digital display starts at 00.000 at sunrise and goes to 99.999% at sunset, before starting over again. The shorter daylight hours in Scotland during the winter impact on the readings. Appropriately, the mid-point of the exhibition coincides with the shortest day of the year, meaning the readings will change in the second half of the exhibition as we shift towards the days getting longer again. The glowing orange digits evoke the sun.

FOYER

Motion and Rest 5

2002

Edition of three. Custom electronics, 768 LEDs

Courtesy of the artist

Campbell captures footage of a person slowly making a journey supported by crutches. This series shows the extreme effort on the part of the protagonist to get where they are going and points our gaze on something mainstream art and media rarely shows. One of the subjects, Jennifer Bartlett, has written the following about her participation in the series:

“Viewers might see exploitation in *Motion and Rest...* This says nothing about the actual work; rather it is a product of the viewer’s own discomfort with disability. One can mistake the piece for exploitation if one accepts it from the mere ableist point of view - that this body is *less than*. How can a piece be exploitation of the figure when the said figure is entirely complicit? Rather than a *damaged human form*, when I look at my piece, I feel joy. I see movement that is neither “normal” nor “abnormal,” rather simply *is*.”

Jennifer Barlett, *Motion and Rest #2*, p. 92, *Material Light*,

Hatje Cantz Verlag, Ostfildern and Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery, New York; 2010

GALLERY 1

Exploded View (Commuters)

2011

Custom electronics, 1152 LEDs, wire, steel

Courtesy of the artist

More than a thousand LED bulbs form a 3D constellation showing commuters walking in conformist patterns. Campbell eloquently expresses the routines of everyday life as we go about our daily business. Part of a series which also includes choreographed footage of ballet dancers, we are able to recognise the activities even though they are not in high definition.

Tilted Plane

2011

Custom electronics, lightbulbs

Courtesy of the artist

Campbell's *Tilted Plane* is one of the largest scale works ever installed in DCA's galleries. Viewers are encouraged to walk amidst the work and immerse themselves in it. Despite the spaced out formation of the image and the low resolution within the work, the cognitive processes in our brains enable us to decipher the imagery of moving birds. Presented within a black mesh box, hundreds of lights appear infinite - their reflections on the floor adding to the illusion of depth.

Home Movies 1040-3

2011

Video installation: custom electronics, 1040 LEDs

Courtesy of the artist

This work is from a series in which Campbell employs strings of individual LEDs to project footage of old home movies of typical family gatherings and children playing. The footage has been acquired by the artist from the online market place eBay and is a comment on the pursuit of technological progress outdating the means in which we produce memory objects. The low resolution of Campbell's work simultaneously protects the identity of the protagonists and casts them in to abstracted memory where we can no longer exactly recall how someone looked. The subjects gain a universal and shared sense of what makes us human.

A Fire, A Freeway and A Walk

1999-2000

Custom electronics, 42 LEDs, velvet

Courtesy of the artist

Forty-two pixels surrounding the perimeter of a rectangular black velvet panel installed on a wall create the edge of an image using red, green and blue LEDs. The abstracted imagery is footage of a flickering fire, a nocturnal drive on an American freeway and a walk in a park. The association of firelight and warmth contrasts amidst the cool blue and white lights otherwise on display in the gallery.

GALLERY 2

Last Day in the Beginning of March

2003

26 light bulbs, custom electronics, speakers, sound

Collection of the Berkeley Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley

Last Day in the Beginning of March reflects upon the last day of the life of the artist's brother. This work is a large room-sized installation which consists of twenty-six lights suspended from the ceiling and shining onto the floor below, each creating a circular pool of light. Each light bulb is connected to an electronic circuit which contains a fictionalised electronic 'memory' of a specific event from that day. The circuit modulates the brightness of each light according to the rhythm of the encoded memory. The soundtrack of rain contributes to the melancholic air in the room. The small electronic chassis which contains the memory is placed near its modulated pool of light and has a rear-lit text label revealing to the viewer a description of that particular memory or event. Pulses of light resemble heartbeats, decisions and routines.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere thanks to Jim Campbell and his studio for their assistance in realising this exhibition, in particular Meghan Gorham and Elliot Roe.

With thanks to the lenders to the exhibition:

The artist

The de Young Museum, San Francisco and the Collection of David Breskin

Collection of the Berkeley Art museum, University of California, Berkeley

With thanks to Hosfelt Gallery, San Francisco and Bryce Wolkowitz Gallery, New York

TALKS & EVENTS

Book your place at www.dca.org.uk, by calling **01382 909 900** or at DCA Box Office.

DJCAD Artist Talk

Wed 19 November

11:00

Cinema. Free, drop in.

Jim Campbell will discuss his practice in this lecture presented in association with DJCAD.

Meet the Artist

Fri 21 November

18:30

Galleries. Free, but ticketed.

Join Jim Campbell and Graham Domke, DCA Exhibitions Curator, for a special introductory conversation and tour of the exhibition.

Live Electronic Music

Phosphene with support from Erstlaub

Thu 27 November

19:00

Free, but ticketed.

Join us for a rare live performance by broadcaster, record producer and writer John Cavanagh performing under the name Phosphene. The performance will include sonic interactions with Jim Campbell's installation and a live accompaniment to classic footage of Vincent Price and a Raven. Phosphene will be supported by artist and musician Erstlaub, who makes a welcome return to DCA having played at Music Language Redux in 2013.

Senior Citizen Kane Tour

Tue 9 December

10:30—12:00

Galleries. Free, but ticketed.

This event is especially for our visitors aged 60 and over. Explore the exhibition with one of our friendly Gallery Assistants, then share your thoughts and chat over a cup of tea.

BSL Signed Tour

Wed 14 January

11:00

Galleries. Free, drop in.

Join us for an informal BSL signed tour of the exhibition followed by a cup of tea and a chat. We will take time exploring the exhibition, asking questions and sharing ideas supported by experienced sign language interpreter Jennifer Ramsay.

(((echo)))

Thursday 15 January

19:00

Galleries. Free, but ticketed.

Come along and contribute to this popular event designed to provoke discussions about the current exhibition through a series of presentations by local artists. Email exhibitions@dca.org.uk if you would like to propose something.

YOUNGER VISITORS & FAMILY GROUPS

Family Art Labs: space and time for the family to explore and make together

Sat 13 December & Sat 10 January
13:00—15:00

Activity Room. Free, but ticketed.

Suitable for all ages from 5 years and above. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Join our artists for some fun and have time to explore Jim Campbell's artworks in the gallery. Talk about what you see, make creative responses and try out new techniques. Make the most of our space to create mess and experiment. Each session lasts two hours but you don't have to stay the whole time.

Art Cart

Sat 22 November & Sat 24 January
13:00—15:00

Level 4. Free, drop in.

Fun for all ages, Art Cart offers active ways to connect with each exhibition.

For this show you can make your own glow in the dark badge, 3D snowflake or have fun drawing on the lightbox.

Activity Room DIY

Open daily unless being used for a workshop.

Free, drop in.

DCA Activity Room is a comfortable and imaginative space designed for younger visitors and family groups to have a go at DIY making activities, browse our excellent children's art library and make connections with the exhibition. For this show there will be lots of black and white, dark and light and shapes to make.

ARTIST'S CHOICE SCREENINGS

For each exhibition we ask the artist to choose films to screen in the cinema to coincide with their show. Jim Campbell has selected Michelangelo Antonioni's rarely-seen masterpiece *The Passenger*.

The Passenger

Thu 4 December

20:45

DCA Cinema

Unavailable for many years and criminally overlooked, *The Passenger* is a masterful film, which works as a slow-burning thriller and a penetrating look into the nature of identity. Jack Nicholson plays a burnt-out American reporter who assumes the identity of a dead man in order to escape his own life. But the criminal past of his adopted persona soon catches up with him. Accessible, intelligent and hauntingly beautiful, it also features a virtuoso performance by Nicholson with direction to match.

Director: Michelangelo Antonioni
Italy / Spain / France 1975 / 2h6m /
Digital / 12A

NEXT EXHIBITION

Florian & Michael Quistrebert

7 February 2014— 22 March 2015

Hypnotic abstract videos and paintings by collaborative French brothers Michael (born 1976) and Florian (born 1982). Based in Paris and Amsterdam, the artists were recently nominated for the prestigious Marcel Duchamp Prize. Exhibition supported by the Institut français d'Ecosse.

JUST ASK

Our friendly Gallery Assistants are always happy to help with your questions. Keep up to date with the very latest from DCA by visiting www.dca.org.uk, or by following us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

SEASONAL OPENING HOURS

The Gallery will close at 15:00 on the 24 and 31 December. DCA will be closed on 25 and 26 December and 1 and 2 January for seasonal holidays.

DCA will be closed from Mon 5 to Wed 7 January for essential maintenance.